

The Business Interchange project is a government funded programme that aims to help further education providers increase their vocational expertise to meet the needs of their sector by placing teachers, tutors and trainers back into industry.

Tyneside Training Services, a provider of road transport training since 1969, has always taken pride in delivering the highest level of training. Having experienced great success in the pilot phase of this programme, Tyneside Training Services were keen to offer further staff members the opportunity to update their skills.

Following an initial visit from STAR advisor Sheila Craggs, a placement was set up for assessor Dennis Cowley to make several visits to local employer, Springfield Honda.

Dennis felt that getting back into industry would enable him to maintain his current knowledge of the industry which is often difficult to do when teaching full time. This would be of benefit to all learners on the Motor Vehicle programme at the centre.

Line Manager, Allan McNaught believed that a work based placement would be ideal as a way to ensure assessors are up to date with current industry best practice and modern diagnostic techniques utilised in Main Dealers.

Having spent several days observing and working with the workshop staff at the Honda garage and carrying out diagnostic procedures on customers' vehicles, Dennis can now relate his experience on

the work placement to his own work as an MOT Tester. In addition to this he can relate his experience to current 3rd year Apprentices during both classroom and workshop sessions. He has also been able to compare his experiences with colleagues who have visited different employers. As a result Dennis was able to develop a Task Safety Analysis that met both the syllabus and current best practice.

On the impact of his placement Dennis Cowley stated:

'The diagnostic techniques learned were relevant in that they covered up to date current industry best practice as used by mainstream manufacturers in their dealerships. I am now more confident when giving practical demonstrations of diagnostic procedures as I am able to relate the experience gained from my visit and comparison with colleagues directly to the learners own experience and learning against the criteria of the NVQ.'

As a result of the placement programme's success Tyneside Training's next annual staff appraisal will be encouraging assessors to carry out follow up visits to employers as part of their CPD.

For more information regarding this project please contact STAR using the details below.

